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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Biden administration suspending 44 U.S flights by Chinese carriers

WASHINGTON, Jan 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Transportation Department said on Friday it would suspend 44 China-bound flights from the United States by four Chinese carriers in response to the Chinese government's decision to suspend some U.S. carrier flights over COVID-19 concerns.

The Biden administration action came after Chinese authorities suspended 20 United Airlines, 10 American Airlines (AAL.O) and 14 Delta Air Lines (DAL.N) flights since Dec. 31 after some passengers tested positive for COVID-19. The Transportation Department said as recently as Tuesday that the Chinese government had canceled U.S. flights.

The suspensions will begin on Jan. 30 with Xiamen Airlines' scheduled Los Angeles-to-Xiamen flight and run through March 29.

The decision will cut some flights by Xiamen, Air China (601111.SS), China Southern Airlines (600029.SS) and China Eastern Airlines (600115.SS). The Chinese Embassy in Washington did not immediately comment.

The department said France and Germany have taken similar action against China's COVID-19 actions.

The Transportation Department said China's suspension of the 44 flights "are adverse to the public interest and warrant proportionate remedial action." It added that China's "unilateral actions against the named U.S. carriers are inconsistent" with a China-U.S. bilateral agreement.

China has also suspended U.S. flights by Chinese carriers after passengers later tested positive.

The department said that if China revised its "policies to bring about the necessary improved situation for U.S. carriers, the Department is fully prepared to once again revisit the action." But it also warned that if China cancels more flights, "we reserve the right to take additional action."

China has all but shut its borders to travelers, cutting total international flights to just 200 a week, or 2% of pre-pandemic levels, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) said in September.

The number of U.S. flights being scrapped



A passenger wearing a mask, amid the health threat of novel coronavirus, arrives on a direct flight from China at Chicago's O'Hare airport in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., January 24, 2020. REUTERS/Kamil Krzaczyński/File Photo

has surged since December, as infections caused by the highly contagious Omicron variant of the coronavirus soared to record highs in the United States.

Beijing and Washington have sparred over air services since the start of the pandemic. In August, the U.S. Transportation Department limited four flights from Chinese carriers to 40% passenger capacity for four weeks after Beijing imposed identical limits on four United Airlines flights.

Before the recent cancellations, three U.S. airlines and four Chinese carriers were operating about 20 flights a week between the countries, well below the figure of more than 100 per week before the pandemic.

## Blinken talks Iran with Lavrov, sees only brief window to reach nuclear deal

GENEVA, Jan 21 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he discussed Iran on Friday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, warning there was only a brief window to bring talks to save the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to a successful conclusion.

Blinken told reporters the deal was an example of how Moscow and Washington can work together on security issues, urging Russia to use the influence it has and its relationship with Iran to impress upon Tehran the sense of urgency.

Blinken said there was still a window to return to the deal - which has unraveled since 2018 when then-U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned it - but warned that Tehran's continuing nuclear advances would foil any return to the accord if a fresh pact was not reached in coming weeks.

"The talks with Iran about a mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA have reached a decisive moment," Blinken said, referring to the deal called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"If a deal is not reached in the next few weeks, Iran's ongoing nuclear advances will make it impossible to return to the JCPOA. But right now, there's still a window, a brief one, to bring those talks to a successful conclusion and address the remaining concerns of all sides."

The agreement between Iran and world powers lifted sanctions against Tehran in exchange for restrictions on its atomic activities.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration and its European allies said on Thursday it was now just a matter of weeks to salvage the deal after the latest round of talks in which a French diplomatic source said there had been no progress on the core issues. read more

Indirect talks between Iran and the United States on reviving the deal resumed two months ago.

Separately, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Twitter that in talks with Lavrov he had discussed Russia stepping up the building of new power plants in Iran.

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# US starts shipping free COVID tests amid Omicron - White House

WASHINGTON, Jan 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Postal Service has begun shipping free at-home rapid COVID-19 tests after millions of orders were placed through a new federal website launched this week, the White House said on Friday as the rise in Omicron-related cases shifted nationwide.

The federal government has tens of millions of tests on hand and started sending them on Thursday, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeffrey Zients told reporters at a briefing, adding the administration would release more data next week.

The push to get tests in the hands of Americans at no cost, along with free best-protective masks, comes as the surge in cases driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant began to subside in some states.

The average daily U.S. COVID-19 cases from the Omicron variant fell about 5% in the past week, particularly in areas that saw an early surge such as New York, Rhode Island and Connecticut, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said. There were about 744,600 cases per day on average in the past seven days. “In some parts of the country we are seeing the number of daily cases caused by the Omicron variant beginning to decline,” CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said at the briefing. “The surge in cases started at different times in different regions and (we) may continue to see high case counts in some areas of the country in the days and weeks ahead.”

Daily COVID-19 hospitalizations were down about 1% at 21,000 on average in the past seven days, she said, with daily deaths at more than 1,700 per day.

Walensky also said the agency was looking to shift its language on COVID-19 vaccinations to encourage Americans to be “up-to-date” by having a timely booster dose, but did not say whether it was formally changing its definition of fully vaccinated.

“Protection against infection and hospitalization with the Omicron variant is highest for those who are up to date with their vaccination, meaning those who are boosted when they are eligible,” she said.



People walk past a COVID-19 testing sign during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., January 20, 2022. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri



## Editor's Choice



Workers clean an oil spill caused by abnormal waves, triggered by a massive underwater volcanic eruption in Tonga, off the coast of Lima, in Ventanilla, Peru January 19, 2022. REUTERS/Angela Ponce



Supporters of reproductive choice take part in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, in New York City, New York, October 2, 2021. REUTERS/Caitlin...MORE



Sabino Leal, 80, a resident of Las Manchas, returns home for the first time since the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano, on the Canary Island of La Palma, Spain, January 20, 2022. REUTERS/Borja Suarez



Aerial view of houses in La Laguna, surrounded by Cumbre Vieja volcano lava, on the Canary Island of La Palma, Spain, December 18, 2021. REUTERS/Borja Suarez



A worker cleans an oil spill caused by abnormal waves, triggered by a massive underwater volcanic eruption in Tonga, off the coast of Lima, in Ventanilla, Peru January 19, 2022. REUTERS/Angela Ponce



Workers clean up an oil spill caused by abnormal waves, triggered by a massive underwater volcanic eruption half a world away in Tonga, at the Peruvian beach in Ventanilla, Peru, January 18, 2022. REUTERS/Pilar Olivares



COVID-19 Is The Driving Force Of Change

Report: China Could Overtake U.S.  
As World's Largest Economy By 2028



A woman wearing a mask labors in a garment factory in Donghai county in east China's Jiangsu province Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020.

KEY POINTS

According to data from The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), China will overtake the U.S. to become the world's biggest economy by 2028

The report says China's "skilful management of the pandemic" and the overall long-term impact the pandemic are the reasons for the major change

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

China will overtake the US to become the world's biggest economy by 2028, five years earlier than previously forecast, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a report has found. The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), a UK-based think tank, said in its annual World Economic League Table released on Saturday that one of the impacts of the global health crisis as been "to redistribute economic momentum with Asia doing best and Europe worst". China's "skilful management of the pandemic" and the long-term impact the pandemic will have on Western growth means China's "relative performance has improved."

"We now think that the Chinese economy in dollar terms will overtake the US economy in 2028, a full 5 years earlier than we

thought last year," the report states. It notes for instance that authorities reacted "vigorously" to the COVID-19 crisis, thus inflicting less damage on the economy. As a result, while most Western economies are expected to register negative growth for the year, China is forecast to record a 2 per cent growth rate.



It is then expected to grow by an annual 5.7 per cent between 2021-2025 and

4.5 per cent annually from 2026 to 2030 and then 3.9 per cent the following five years.

In contrast, the US is projected to grow by an annual 1.9 per cent from 2022 to 2024 and then by 1.6 per cent following a "strong post-pandemic rebound" next year.

"For some time, an overarching theme of global economics has been the economic and soft power struggle between the United States and China. The Covid-19 pandemic and corresponding economic fallout have certainly tipped this rivalry in China's favour," the report says.

The US is the world's most impacted country having lost more than 330,000 lives to the pandemic and recorded nearly 19 million infections since the beginning of the outbreak, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

(Courtesy weforum.org)



Related

World Economy Will Return To "Pre- Pandemic Levels" By 2022, Per Watchdog

Vaccinations and financial support from governments will help the global economy recover to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021, a global economic watchdog has predicted.

But the forecast by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also said the bounce back will be uneven in countries around the world and will depend heavily on the

success of battling COVID-19.

"The contribution of Europe and North America to global growth will remain smaller than their weight in the world economy," OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said introducing a report published last Tuesday.



"China, which started recovering earlier, is projected to grow strongly, accounting for over one-third of world economic growth in 2021."

OECD secretary-general Angel Gurría said it was a sign of "hope" for the first time since the pandemic hit at the beginning of this year.

"The good news about vaccines has instilled a degree of optimism... but we are not out of the woods yet," he said.

The OECD predicts the global economy will shrink about 4.2% this year and rebound by the same rate in 2021. It will grow by 3.7% the following year, the watchdog predicted. But Gurría warned that "this would still leave all OECD economies smaller at the end of 2021 than they were at the end of 2019".



Many European governments have been gradually reopening their economies as virus cases come under control and the winter shopping season begins ahead of Christmas and the New Year. Boone said the vaccine would be crucial to the turnaround: "Efficient vaccination campaigns and better co-operation between

countries could accelerate the distribution of the vaccine worldwide.

"Conversely, the current resurgence of the virus in many places reminds us that governments may be forced again to tighten restrictions on economic activity." (Courtesy <https://www.euronews.com/>)



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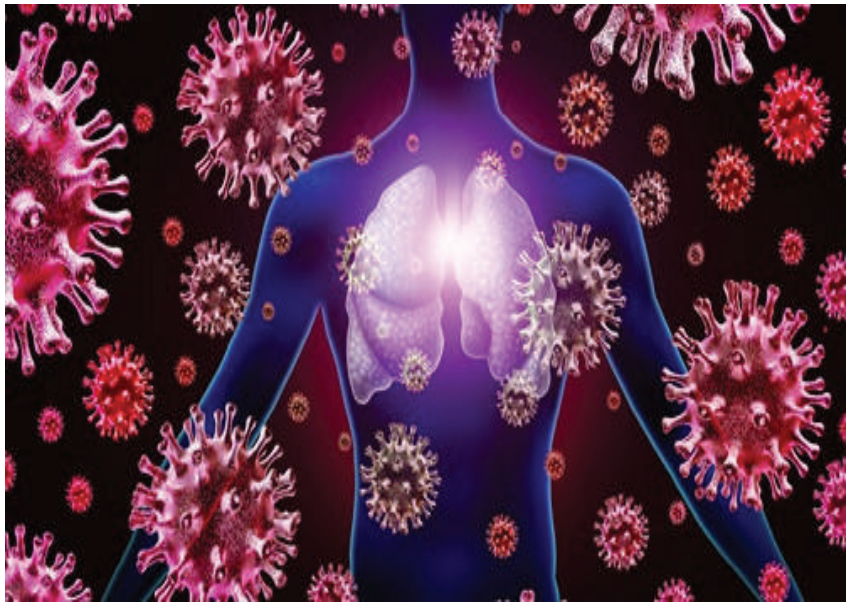
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Several Countries Detect  
New COVID-19 Mutation



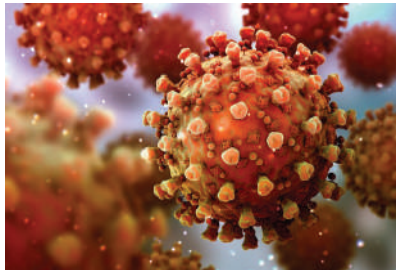
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The highly contagious mutation of the coronavirus first detected in the United Kingdom continues to spread, now being reported in parts of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and Canada. On Monday, South Korea became the latest country to report COVID-19 infections with the variation that could be more easily passed between people, according to the Korean Herald. Most cases have been linked to travel from Great Britain, where the variant was first detected, the newspaper reported. The United Kingdom initiated a lockdown, and several countries banned travelers from Great Britain last week, but researchers are concerned that the variation could have been circulating undetected in other countries for weeks.

"Unfortunately, this is another twist in the plot," Alessandro Vespignani, director of the Network Science Institute at Northeastern University in Boston, told the New York Times.

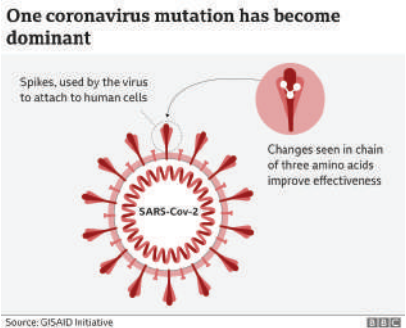
Canadian officials have detected at least two cases in Ontario, according to The Washington Post. A couple from a town north of Toronto contracted the variant but had no travel history, which means it likely

came from community spread.



The mutation has been found in seven people in Japan who had either traveled to Great Britain or been in contact with someone who did. Japan will close its borders to non-residents on Monday, a ban that will last through the end of January, according to the BBC. In Spain, the variant has been found in Madrid, where four cases have been confirmed and three are probable, according to The Guardian. All these cases are linked to recent travel to Great Britain. The first case in France was found in Tours, about 150 miles southwest of Paris, according to Reuters. The French citizen was living in Great Britain and traveled from London to central France on Dec. 19, a day before the British government

started the lockdown. The man doesn't have symptoms and is isolating at home. Sweden also detected its first case this weekend, Reuters reported. The traveler visited the country from Great Britain for Christmas and is isolating in Sörmland, a city south of Stockholm. Viruses mutate often. Several coronavirus mutations have been detected this year, but they were minor, The New York Times reported.



The latest version of the virus found in Great Britain has 23 mutations, which may change how it is transmitted. A new study published by British researchers last week found that the variant may be 56% more contagious, but they didn't find any evidence that it causes more severe COVID-19. Vaccine specialists say that current COVID-19 vaccines should be able to block the new variant.

"The preliminary findings are pretty convincing that more rapid vaccination is going to be a really important thing for any country that has to deal with this or similar variants," Nicholas Davies, the lead author and an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told the newspaper.

Additional variants have been identified in South Africa, Nigeria, and other countries as well, according to CBS News. The U.S. hasn't yet reported any cases of the mutation. However, the U.S. will require airline passengers from the United Kingdom to test negative within 72 hours of their departure, the CDC announced. The new rule will begin on Monday. (Courtesy <https://www.webmd.com>)

Related

How COVID-19 Affects Your Body

Doctors continue to learn about the short-term and long-term effects of COVID-19 on your body. For some people, it starts with basic flu symptoms. But it could eventually affect your lungs, liver, kidneys, and even your brain.



**How It Spreads** Usually the virus makes contact with you when a nearby infected person sends droplets into the air by coughing, sneezing, or talking. It spreads easily between people within about 6 feet of each other. An infected person can spread these droplets, even if they don't feel sick. The virus may infect you after you touch an object, like a doorknob, that has the virus on it. But that's not as common.



**Upper Respiratory Infection** Once the virus enters the body, it usually settles in the cells that line your nose, sinus cavity, and throat. For most people, this is where it stays. Symptoms often follow, but you may not feel anything for up to 2 weeks, as the virus starts to invade healthy cells and reproduce. You can transmit it to others even if you don't show any symptoms.



**Other Common Symptoms** The first

symptoms that typically appear include a fever, headache, sore throat, and dry cough. But what you'll feel can vary widely in this early stage. You may also have:

- Shortness of breath
- Chills, fever, body aches
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Unusual tiredness
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Nausea or diarrhea



**Lower Respiratory Infection** If your immune system can't subdue COVID-19 in the first week or so, the virus may move down into your lungs. There, it attacks cells that line them. Fluid and mucus build up and make it harder to get oxygen to your blood. It gets tough to breathe. This is pneumonia. Most people recover in a week or two, but it can take longer. (Courtesy webmd.com)

